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A-ONE #0230   07/28/00

~ King Web Novel A Hit! ~ People Are Talking!   ~ SDRAM For Pentium 4!
~ Macromedia's Flash 5! ~ Carnivore Under Review ~ Napster Showdown!
~ Symantec Spam-filter! ~ CGE 2K - This Weekend! ~ Internet Privacy
~ DigiPen's First Grads! ~ Intellivision Rocks!   ~ NetZero Grows!

-* E-tailers Fined $1.5 Million *-

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            -* Microsoft Asks For Lower Court Venue*-
          -* Supercade: Videogame History, 1971-84 Book *-



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->From the Editor's Keyboard              "Saying it like it is!"
   """"""""""""""""""""""""""""




Of course you knew that it was too good to be true!  First week of vacation
and I think I saw the sun once.  The weather has been downright awful; rain
almost every day so far, with no let-up in sight.  I really did want to mix
in some work around the yard with my rest and relaxation!  Maybe my second
week will be better.

And since I'm on vacation, I haven't really been following the news too
closely enough to formulate any editorial opinions this week.  One story
that I wish I'd paid more attention to is this Napster issue.  I can see
both sides of this issue; I hope that some kind of middle ground can be
found.  Meanwhile, I guess I'll catch up on my reading.  Maybe I'll even
download that new Stephen King book on the web (and pay my share!).

Until next time...



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                      PEOPLE ARE TALKING
                    compiled by Joe Mirando
                      jmirando@portone.com



Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Old mother nature is sure messing with
me these days. Today was eighteen degrees cooler than normal here in
the northeast. I don't pretend to know what that has to say about
global warming, but it's both annoying and refreshing at the same time.

Let's face it, this is supposed to be the hottest part of the year. And
yet today's weather was more like late April than late July. My "day
job" is hot, dirty work to start with. During the summer it's often all
I can do to keep functioning. Yet for the past week or so I haven't
even broken a sweat. It's much more pleasant to be able to work without
having to worry about dehydration or heat stroke, but there's still
something inside me that wonders what price I'll have to pay somewhere
down the road. And let's face it... there's ALWAYS a price.

Perhaps the lack of heat is a shock to my system, but I can swear that
I see a parallel to my computing situation. I still use my TT a lot,
but the PC laptop seems to be "coming into its own" now that I've
switched from Windows to Linux. The TT is a fantastic machine. It's
easy to use (like all Atari computers), it's even got a personality....
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But it's slow by today's standards. So as a concession to today's fast-paced gotta-get-it-done mentality I've been using the PC more and more. It's fast, it shows billions of colors, it's got more memory than any personal computer should need, and it's (drum roll, please)... modern.

Yes it's a fine machine... the envy of geeks everywhere. But every time I use it, I have the feeling that it's going to cost me something somewhere down the road. Like a little bit of my soul is being sucked out through my fingertips as I type. I know that it might sound funny to someone who's never used an Atari but we know better, don't we?

In the next week or two I'll be taking another run at installing Linux on the TT... yes, there is a Linux package that can be installed on the TT and some Falcons... and I hope to have some interesting and uplifting information about it soon.

We've also got an article by our good friend Alejandro Aguilar about the Costa Rican government's push to make email and internet access available to every citizen, but it's not quite ready yet. It's not Ale's fault. It's mine. I simply haven't had the time to give it the attention that the subject deserves. Sorry Ale.

Well, let's get on with the news, hints, tips, and info from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup
===================================

Edward Baiz continues the discussion we listened in on last week about the latest version of STinG:

"I still cannot get Sting 1.26 to run on my Hades. Mr Anderson said I had to re-install HSmodem. He also said that some of the beta testers had Hades computers. If anyone talks to any of these guys/gals, have them email me so I can see just how they did it."

John Garone tells Edward:

"Hope you received my scripts by E-mail.
I sent you Default CFG, Dial SCR, Hsmodem7 settings and Route Tab.
Let me know if you've received them!
Your problem of an incomplete connection sounds like the one I had when I used Hsmodem 6 instead of 7 (when I upgraded to Sting 1.22/Dialer 1.16.)"

Djordje Vukovic adds:

"I think that the new serial.stx (V1.20) has some hidden problem. It made trouble to me here (Mega ST4, TOS1.4- or 2.06, Intel144/144e modem) and sometime crashed in Dialer during or after initialization. Whether it would work or not depended on to which node of my ISP I was connecting- it seemed they used two different sets of software on their nodes, which did not respond in the same way during login and initialization (coincidence or not, the nodes with which serial.stx v1.20 had problems were those where ISP had 56K modems; the nodes with which serial.stx worked ok were those with 33.6K modems). The older serial.stx (V1.15) worked OK all the time.

I contacted Ronald too, and he has even sent me a STiNG suite adjusted by himself, together with configured HSMODA7 files, to be used from a floppy on a bare machine, but that crashed, too. So, for the time being, I am using old serial.stx v1.15 with STiNG V1.26 and it works.

Ronald's final comment was that one of the variants of my ISP's software somehow sent some wrong data during initialization, and there were also some doubts that maybe my modem did not have quite complete rts/cts protocol (true, the documentation is unclear, yet everything had always worked before) BUT IT REMAINED UNCLEAR why the older serial.stx was more tolerant to these faults. Hopefully some new version may clear that?"

Tim Conrardy posts this for all you MIDI folks out there:

"Go to:

 http://www.egroups.com/files/atari-midi/

For shareware, freeware and PD Atari-Midi apps.Some recent uploads include some "Dutch Atari-Midi " apps that have become Freeware like MT32 Factory, thanks to "Stitchtin ST" (hope I spelled that right!)

Actually, I would like to see if there are any problems with the downloads, as one of our members(of Atari-Midi) are having problems. So if any of you can please try downloading a few of these apps, and see if you get any "error" messages during the download.The member is using Explorer ver 4, so I wonder if THAT is the problem.

Thanks...and enjoy these apps!!!"

Mario Becroft posts this query about a spreadsheet:

"A member of our local Atari user group uses the EZCalc spreadsheet from Royal Software, and has a few questions about the program.

1. Is there a way to calculate standard deviation with EZCalc?

2. Is Royal Software still in business, and if so, how may they be contacted?

3. What is the most recent version of EZCalc?

Any advice on the above points would be much appreciated."

John Kolak tells Mario:

"This is extremely old software. I used to sell it as an Atari dealer in the 80's. I would be very surprised if Royal Software is still around. Most likely only one version was issued, as Royal was not a major player in the Atari software arena. Your friend should really consider moving up to something more modern and supported like Texel."

Ian Schofield asks about compilers:

"I am fairly new to the Atari platform (although I've known about it for quite some time), so please bear with these questions...

What is the newest version of the GNU compiler for the atari st? (the newest I've seen is 2.72).

Where are the binaries of the GNU compiler components available?

What are the basic components one needs to download to have a *useable*
GNU compiler?

Can anyone point me to a recent installation guide (I found one for pre
2.x, but found it difficult to follow
as the file names were different).

I've searched for this info on the web and have not found anything
useful yet. I'd appreciate your help."

Rasmus Jan Nikolas Keller tells Ian:

"That's quite simple the newest version is 2.95.2 Rel. 4 and you can
download it at http://freemint.de/progrm.html or at
http://wh58-508.st.uni-magdeburg.de/ftp/pub/mint/programming/ "

Marlin Bates asks about Spectre GCR:

"I have a question. Way back when, I used a Spectre GCR. When I
upgraded to a Mega STe, I had a number of problems accessing the
floppies in Mac mode. I thought, perhaps, it was my machine.

I need to know - is/was there a problem with floppy access on Mega STes?
 Does it have something to do with the Ajax controller? Does the 1.44
floppy do it wrong?"

John Kolak tells Marlin:

"That's correct. I had a TT that had the same problem. Correspondence with
Gadgets tech support revealed that the mac mode does not work with 1.44
equipped computers. The TT had the further problem that even if I used the
original 720 drive (mine was an early TT), you had to install a circuit
board patch on the Spectre to work correctly with the TT's 16Mhz
motherboard. Since the Mega STE only runs the CPU at 16MHz, this should not
be an issue for you."

Marlin replies:

"Ahhh, I suspected as much. So, here is my question:

Given that the Mega STe has an internal 1.44 am I hosed? OR can I hook
up an external 720 and just run floppies through that?

Or should I just run it through the 1040STf I have?

Also, the SST and MegaTalk came out, correct? Where those just Mega ST
compatible boards or is the spec the same as the card input in the STe
(I suspect they are different, but thought I might ask)

Sorry to bother y'all with this, but it is bugging me A LOT and I want
make sure I can run it. Yes, I have a PowerMac sitting right next to
the Mega, but old habits die hard!"

John tells Marlin:

"If I remember correctly, the problem was in the floppy controller chip, not
the drive, but I could be wrong. The only way I was able to keep the TT

Spectre compatible, and you can probably do this in the Mega STE if your floppy controller is socketed, is to replace the AJAX chip with the original ST's Western Digital chip, and possibly change the floppy mechanism to a 720k drive. I also changed dip switch 7 (?) to let TOS know that 1.44 support is not installed.

> Or should I just run it through the 1040STf I have?

A lot easier if you can stand 8MHz, and can get a 4MB RAM upgrade for it.
>
> Also, the SST and MegaTalk came out, correct? Where those just Mega ST
> compatible boards or is the spec the same as the card input in the STe
> (I suspect they are different, but thought I might ask)

Both products (the SST and MegaTalk) were released. The high specs on the MegaTalk serial chips were incredible for it's time, and still faster than what's normally used today. As for the Mega expansion bus, I don't know if they are spec'd the same or not. Martin-Eric Racine might know since I suspect the Mega STE is more closely related to the TT than the ST.

I've long decided that Atari is a legitimate hobby even if we are falling behind the power curve. If people can have a Porsche in the driveway and restore a 55 Chevy, we can have the latest computers and still tinker with Atari."

Marek Dankowski asks for info about fonts for his favorite document processor:

"I need some fonts for Papyrus with support for ISO 8859-2 (East and Middle Europe). Help me , please."

Jim Logan tells Marek:

"I don't know how you tell whether a font has support for ISO 8859-2. Microsoft have made available a number of TrueType fonts which seem to have quite a range of characters. They may include the ones you need. The URL is:

http://microsoft.com/typography/fontpack/default.htm

They come packed in a peecee executable form and have to be copied from the font folder once they have been installed. They work fine under Atari Papyrus."

On a related note, Charles Stanley adds:

"At first a reluctant convert to Papyrus, I fell head-over-heels for it when I received an emailed MS Word Doc and found that Papyrus could actually convert, read and print it. WOW! I said! Nothing else can do that! Previously I had to spend ages with Protext or another Editor removing the MS cr*p.

So, how do I pay my subscription and register for it? I can't find any info in the docs supplied in the Demo (info must be there somewhere?)."

Chris Simon tells Charles:

"I ordered it from the web site (www.rom-logicware.com) - on a PC I'm afraid as it uses SSL! Or send an email to mail@rom-logicware.com or

support@rom-logicware.com for info."

Well folks, that's it for this week. Tune in again next week, same
time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying
when...

PEOPLE ARE TALKING

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - CGE 2000 This Weekend!
   """""""""""""""""""""""""""""""   Intellivision Rocks!
                                     DigiPen's First Grads!
                                     'Supercade' And much more!

->From the Editor's Controller - Playin' it like it is!
   """"""""""""""""""""""""""""""

LOTS of gaming news this week! If you're into retro-gaming, this is the
week to enjoy. The Classic Gaming Expo is this weekend in Las Vegas. Van
Burnham will be debuting her new classic gaming book, "Supercade: A Visual
History of the Videogame Age 1971-1984" which sounds fascinating! I wish
that Don Thomas had pushed a little harder trying to get his book published!
I hope to be able to find Burnham's book soon! Anyway, if you're a classic
gaming fan, Vegas is the place to be this weekend. I wish that I had the
disposable cash to be able to attend.

Since I'm on vacation this week, I hadn't planned to do an editorial.
However, during my usual visits to my various news sources, I came across
this "press release" from Readers Digest. Lo and behold, I discovered that
this well-respected magazine supported my opinions regarding video game
violence and its alleged effect on young people. Although the article
doesn't focus on video games, the premise is the same. I've included the
article below; I couldn't have said it better myself!

Until next time...

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              What Moms Need to Know About Sons: Aggressive
                 Play Helps Build A Well-Balanced Boy

Christine Texeira decided right from the start her boys would have a
non-violent upbringing: ``No guns, no Nintendo." So she was dismayed when,
on Tommy's second birthday, he opened up his new plastic tool set, pointed
the toy drill at her and said, ``I'm shooting you, Mom!"

The Colorado woman, who had majored in psychology, was trained to believe that boys and girls were really not so different. ''That," she now knows, ''was the furthest thing from the truth."

Alarmed by incidents of violence in schools, moms across America are often confused and concerned about their own boys' seemingly violent behavior. But for most, Reader's Digest magazine has three words of advice: you can relax. ''What Moms Need to Know About Sons," in the magazine's August 2000 issue, tells why aggressive play is usually OK.

Watching her son Kenny crash his toy cars and ''torture" his GI Joe doll, Debbie Clement was understandably unnerved. Then there were the pictures he'd scrawl - explosions, gunfire, or tanks crunching a path of destruction. ''The violence in those drawings gave me pause," the Georgia woman admitted.

But few boys, Harvard psychologist William Pollack assures moms, make the jump from violent imaginations to real violence. ''We'd all have to wear lead vests if every kid who drew stick figures shooting each other grew up to be violent," says the author of Real Boys: Rescuing Our Sons From the Myths of Boyhood.

When Lisa Aulet enrolled her 7-year-old son in a Massachusetts hockey program, she was shocked at the rough body checking -- and disturbed to see her ''quiet, intellectual child" joining right in. But as Pollack points out, there are clear benefits to physical and competitive play.

''Boys learn the limits of aggression, how far they can go safely without injury, how to be aware of others' feelings. Boys who learn those limits are less likely to have temper tantrums or aggressive outbursts later."

In one inner-city school, boys' games often centered on imaginary shootings, fistfights and car crashes, observed Barbara Wilder-Smith of Tufts University. But she also noted that once their stories ended, no real violence erupted. By cooperating on these stories, kids seemed to be learning the difference between real and imaginary, good and evil.

Along with aggressive play or violent fantasies, moms also fear potential trouble when sons keep their emotions bottled up inside. While an angry or tearful daughter may rush straight to a parent's arms, boys generally don't want to be ''babied" - they maintain a stoic facade that is part of our society's ''Boy Code" of behavior.

The key to communication, experts tell Reader's Digest, is to approach boys indirectly:

''When two women want to talk about something intimate," explains Tufts University's Barney Brawer, ''they're likely to sit down, face each other and ask 'How do you feel?' " But ''if you watch two guys, they'll talk while doing something else, like watching a football game. And yet the most personal topics will come out, bit by bit, with never an embarrassing glance at each other."

That's why, Brawer adds, ''a mother who helps her son fix his bicycle might learn more than she could ever squeeze out face-to-face across the dinner table."

While women may instinctively know how a daughter's mind works, bringing up boys can be a constantly baffling experience. ''What Moms Need to Know

About Sons," by Reader's Digest family experts Edwin and Sally Kiester,
offers some timely advice and reassurance.

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News   - The Latest Gaming News!
  """""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""

                Microsoft to Spend $500 Million on Xbox Video Game

Microsoft said on Thursday it will spend half a billion dollars to launch
its Xbox video game console in what will be its grandest product debut ever
as it seeks to unseat Sony Corp. from the top spot in the fast-growing
gaming market.

''This will be the biggest launch Microsoft has ever done," Robbie Bach,
senior vice president of Microsoft's games division, told an annual meeting
of financial analysts at the company's headquarters in Redmond, Wash.

Expected to launch in the fall of 2001, the Xbox would be backed by a $500
million marketing blitz in the first 18 months of its debut, Bach said.

''You can't do this half-hearted. It's a long-term investment and one we
take very seriously," Bach said.

The Xbox will take on the Playstation 2, the long-awaited update to Sony's
hugely popular video game machine that is to hit the U.S. market in
October.

The Xbox will also take on a new machine from Nintendo set to launch next
year, and Sega's Dreamcast, which launched last September.

But Microsoft clearly sees Sony as the one to beat, and Bach's presentation
was peppered with references to how the Xbox will deliver better graphics
and sound than Playstation 2, as well as be far easier to design games for.

The stakes are huge. The video game industry is expected to generate more
than $7 billion in sales of consoles, games and accessories this year, and
has already outpaced Hollywood's box office haul for an entire year.

Announced in February, the Xbox will be armed with a powerful Intel Corp.
processor, an nVidia (RIC) graphics chip, a DVD player and the ability to
connect to the Internet.

''Our hardware design is complete. We are now building the form factors,
the forms to actually put components in. We are now at the stage where were
making serious progress in bringing Xbox to life," Bach said.

The Xbox is Microsoft's latest attempt to expand its product lines beyond
its core personal computer market, and joins its WebTV interactive
television and MSN Internet services as key footholds in the living room.

''The PC market is very important to us because it's where a lot of the

innovation comes from in terms of technology. But we have to be successful in more than just PC gaming," Bach said.

''Xbox really is designed to penetrate that marketplace. It's also designed to bring us another anchor tenant in the home."

Microsoft was building an arsenal of about 30 games, some of which would launch with Xbox and others that would be released afterwards. Bach said development kits would be sent out to about 200 third party developers.

''Where the money will be made will be on software and publishing," Bach said. Apart from selling its own games, Microsoft would collect a royalty on Xbox games published by other software makers.

Sega Sports Hits Home Run With Sega
Sports World Series Baseball 2K1

Fans Score Another Ground-Breaking Title with the
First Sega Sports Baseball Game on Sega Dreamcast

Sega of America, Inc. hits one out of the park today with the release of ''Sega Sports World Series Baseball 2K1," the first ever Sega Sports baseball title for the 128-bit, Internet-ready Sega Dreamcast videogame console, now available in retail stores. Endorsed by Boston Red Sox starter Pedro Martinez, this ground-breaking title delivers the same level of ultra-realistic gameplay found in ''Sega Sports NBA 2K" and ''Sega Sports NFL 2K." Sega Sports has made realistic gameplay a top priority by including nine different types of pitches to choose from. By selecting ''pitch type" you can make pitching decisions based on a pro's real-life ability, and knowing when to relieve your pitcher by using the ''fatigue indicator."

Gamers will see all of their favorite heroes from the 2000 MLB roster in 3D, performing their signature moves and pro batting styles. Gamers can choose Pedro Martinez and dominate with strikeouts or select Ricky Henderson and count on stealing a bag--or two or three.

'''World Series Baseball 2K1' carries on Sega Sports' tradition of introducing innovative titles to the market, and it ushers in the '2K1' series with a bang. We've heard from our consumers and we are excited to be bringing Sega's "World Series Baseball'' heritage back to them," said Martha Hill, director of sports marketing, Sega of America.

Realism is the key in ''Sega Sports World Series Baseball 2K1." The players in this game eerily resemble live MLB players in appearance and ability. All ballparks have been recreated in 3D with so much detail, gamers can read the ads on stadium walls. Throw in the roar of the crowd and amazing camera angles and gamers will feel like they're right in the park. And if that weren't enough, Sega Sports delivers three great modes of play in the game: Season, Exhibition, and Playoffs.

Endorsed by eight-year Major League Baseball veteran Pedro Martinez, ''Sega Sports World Series Baseball 2K1" was developed with his expert counsel. Martinez led the American League in wins, ERA and strikeouts, and was awarded the Cy Young in 1999 for the second time in his career. He is the second pitcher in MLB history to strike out 300 batters in both leagues. ''Pedro's excellence at his position is unparalleled in today's game. His

level of skill and his passion for the game are a perfect fit with Sega Sports' brand values," said Hill.

''Sega Sports World Series Baseball 2K1" is available at retailers nationwide or at www.sega.com. The game is rated ''E" for everyone.

            Take-Two Interactive Shipped Action Bass and Ball Breakers On
               July 24th for Playstation At Aggressive $9.99 Price Point

            Action Bass And Ball Breakers Are The Latest Additions To Take-Two
                Interactive's Successful Value Series Of PlayStation Titles

Take-Two Interactive Software Inc. is pleased to announce that it shipped Ball Breakers and Action Bass for the PlayStation game console to retail at the recommended MSRP of $9.99 on July 24th. Ball Breakers and Action Bass are the latest installments in Take-Two's successful line of value-priced games for PlayStation.

''We are pleased to announce Ball Breakers and Action Bass, the newest additions to the Take-Two $9.99 value lineup," said Larry Muller, COO of Take-Two Interactive. ''These games are another fine example of how we continue to release entertaining, quality games at affordable prices and these releases build on the success of Take-Two's other titles at this price point, led by Spec Ops which is expected to ship over one-million units by this Christmas."

Ball Breakers takes Roman gladiator fighting to the future, an unusual one. As a criminal sentenced to life, your legs have been cut off and replaced with a ball. Your only chance at freedom is to fight the other criminals and become the people's choice. Increasing the madness, players can steal weapons and have their weapons stolen from them. Choose from one of six unique characters and play in any of the 80 levels, which take place in 10 incarceration facilities. Bonus levels become available when levels are completed exceptionally well. There are six gladiatorial game modes: Last Man Rolling, Run the Gauntlet, Pursuit, King of the Hill, Race, and Trick 'n Tag. Unique and dynamic playing fields are created when struck hard by weapons in ''morphable" arenas never before seen in a game. Both multiplayer and single player modes offer play in split-screen mode or as a turn based multiplayer game with two players. Other inmates aren't the only obstacles as arenas are loaded with gun turrets, spikes, flamethrowers and lasers.

Action Bass pits man against fish. Start with five different lures and each time an area is passed the player is rewarded with a new lure. There are nine lures in all. Each lure has its own advantages. Some lures may skim the surface of the water while others simply drop to the bottom. Certain lures are sensitive to the area and players must learn which work best and where. Each area has ''honey holes" where the bass like to swim in the lake. Find these areas and the bass become easier to catch. The challenge mode tests your skill and ability as a fisherman. If the bass you catch fill certain weight requirements, you can move on to the next area and unlock extra modes. Other modes include free mode, which is a practice mode, as well as an aquarium mode where the player has the option to put the fish they capture into an aquarium to look at whenever they please.

Infogrames Hits the Open Road With Test Drive
Cycles for Game Boy Color -- In Stores This Week

Infogrames announced Tuesday that its motorcycle racing game, Test Drive
Cycles, will begin shipping to stores this week for the Nintendo Game Boy
Color.

``Test Drive Cycles allows gamers to get their motors running virtually
anywhere they can fire up a Game Boy," said Laddie Ervin, director of
marketing for sports and racing titles at Infogrames. ``Whether a player
chooses a Harley-Davidson, Bimota, BMW or Moto Guzzi, they will experience
the most intense handheld motorcycle racing experience available."

Test Drive Cycles features some of the world's hottest bikes, from cruisers
to musclebikes to sportbikes. Each class offers its own unique handling
characteristics and riding style. Some of the featured bikes are the
Harley-Davidson FLSTF Fat Boy, the Bimota SB8R, the BMW R1100S and the Moto
Guzzi V11 Sport Roadster. Bikes can be enhanced with Top Speed
Acceleration, Speed Burst and Traction upgrades during tournament play.

In addition to a variety of different bikes, Test Drive Cycles features a
range of tracks in exotic locations from around the world. Race from point
A to point B in Hong Kong; Bali; Amsterdam; Washington, D.C.; Utah; South
Dakota; Alaska; Switzerland; Germany; Death Valley; the French Riviera and
Tokyo.

Players can choose from three game modes - Single Race (includes two player
mode), Tournament and Cop Chase:

    -   Single Race - The player will start out with one bike
        available in their garage and can race against nine other AI
        cycles on different tracks. For "mano y mano" action, two Game
        Boy players can race head-to-head using the Link Cable.

    -   Tournament - In the seven levels of tournament play, the
        player can win prize money for bike purchases and performance
        upgrades for their cycles. Trophies are awarded for tournament
        victories. When the player places first in all three races in
        a given level, the three new tracks at the next level are
        opened up.

    -   Cop Chase - Choose from either of the following authentic
        police bikes: Harley-Davidson FLHT Electra Glide or
        the BMW R1100 RT. The goal is to chase after speeding cyclists
        and write as many tickets as you can in one minute.

Developed by Xantera Inc. and published by Infogrames Test Drive Cycles
will be available for an estimated retail price of $29.99. The game will
include Battery Backup which allows a player to save their five best times
for each track as well as save tournament progress, cycles purchased, cycle
upgrades, prize money won and trophies won. For more information, visit
www.tdcycles.com.

THQ Ships NASCAR 2000 for Game Boy Color System

THQ Inc. announced the release of NASCAR 2000 for Game Boy Color. Based on

NASCAR racing, NASCAR 2000 for Game Boy Color offers a comprehensive racing game for fans of all ages. Licensed by Electronic Arts and developed by Software Creations, NASCAR 2000 is now available at major retail outlets nationwide.

''As the top third-party publisher for Game Boy Color, THQ is pleased to add NASCAR 2000 to our extensive library of Game Boy Color products," said Alison Locke, senior vice president, marketing and sales, THQ.

NASCAR 2000 for Game Boy Color allows players to go fender-to-fender with over 25 NASCAR drivers including Dale Earnhardt and Tony Stewart on 16 real NASCAR tracks. Each car can be fine-tuned as players race in Full Season mode for the Championship. Other features include pit stops where racers can fully customize their cars by fueling up and adjusting wheel lock, shocks and spoilers for maximum speed. NASCAR 2000 is link-cable compatible for two-player racing action and includes battery backup so racers can save game progress.

                  Historic Graduating Class Set to Receive
                  First Ever Four-year Degrees in Video Game
                                  Programming

                  DigiPen Institute of Technology and Nintendo of
                      America Help Meet Industry Demand for Next
                  Generation of Qualified Video Game Developers

The DigiPen Institute of Technology, located within the Nintendo of America complex in Redmond, Washington, will hold its first graduation ceremony since opening in the U.S. in 1998. The inaugural graduating class consists of five students, who earned their four-year degree by taking courses non-stop since the school's opening. Offering the world's first Baccalaureate Degree of Science in Real Time Interactive Simulation, DigiPen's curriculum is also the first solely dedicated to video game development. The school began in 1994 in Vancouver, British Columbia, awarding two-year associate degrees before expanding its curriculum at the Redmond campus. Nintendo provides the institute with equipment, curriculum development guidance and technical expertise. Working together, Nintendo and DigiPen are helping answer the video game industry's biggest need: qualified video game programmers.

Many of this year's graduating class (with either a two-year associate degree or four-year B.S. degree) have already secured positions with top companies such as Interplay, Dreamworks Interactive and KnowWonder. Currently, 24 former DigiPen students are working at Nintendo Software Technology Corporation or NST, Nintendo of America's in-house development group. These young game creators are striving to be the next Miyamoto (creator of such video game icons as Donkey Kong, Mario and Zelda) or Wright (designer of the popular ''Sims" series).

WHO:

   * Graduating students: Eric Smith (Oak Harbor, Washington); Kevin Wright
     (Batesville, Indiana), Andy Klinzing (Leawood, Kansas); Bradford Ayres
     (Maple Valley, Washington) and Jordan Johnson (Grantsville, Utah).
   * Claude Comair, president and founder of DigiPen -- Opening Remarks
   * John Bauer, executive vice president, Nintendo of America Inc. --
     Guest of Honor

* Gabe Newell, president, Valve Entertainment -- Commencement Speech
    * Eric Smith, DigiPen graduate -- Valedictorian Speech

WHEN:

Saturday, July 22

11 am to 12:30 pm

WHERE:

''Plato" Auditorium

DigiPen Institute of Technology

5001 - 150th Ave. NE

Redmond, WA 98052

425/558-0299

VISUALS:

    * Student video game projects will be available for viewing following
      graduation.
    * Video game icon Mario will attend and offer personal congratulations
      to the graduates.

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->A-ONE Gaming Online   -   Online Users Growl & Purr!
   """""""""""""""""""

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                   - New Game Celebrates Book at CGExpo -
                      %1997-2000 - Donald A. Thomas, Jr.
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Contact: Van Burnham, van@supercade.com

For Immediate Release

                    NEW LIMITED EDITION VIDEOGAME CELEBRATES

                    RELEASE OF BOOK ON HISTORY OF VIDEOGAMES
                   Classic-Style Cartridge Actually Works On Vintage
                          Atari Video Game Systems

San Francisco, CA - Van Burnham, author of the forthcoming book Supercade:
A Visual History of the Videogame Age 1971-1984 (www.supercade.com) and
Production Director of Wired Magazine today announced plans for a limited
release of an exciting new videogame, Escape From Supercade!, to
commemorate the upcoming release of her book. Only 100 signed and numbered
limited edition boxed cartridges of this collectable new videogame will
ever be made. Each one has been designed to look and function exactly like
the original games marketed for the Atari 2600 Video Computer System (VCS)
popularized in the early 80's by Atari, Inc. of Sunnyvale, California.
"Not only will the cartridges look and feel like the classic original
games of the Golden Age of videogames," states Burnham, "but the game can
actually be played if the cartridge is plugged-in to any of the thousands
of vintage Atari 2600 VCS machines that still exist today."

Game play details are being withheld until a formal press announcement and
presentation at the Classic Gaming Expo 2000 (www.cgexpo.com) on July 29,
2000. In its third year, Classic Gaming Expo draws hundreds of
enthusiastic classic videogame fans from around the globe. The show will
be held Saturday, July 29 and Sunday, July 30 at Jackie Gaughan's Plaza
Hotel and Casino (www.plazahotelcasino.com) in fabulous Las Vegas, Nevada.
Following the presentation, the first 26 of the 100 signed and numbered
boxed cartridges will be awarded to selected guests who register to win at
the Classic Gaming Expo show booth. Winners will be selected from the
names submitted, and announced following the game's release on the
Supercade Website (www.supercade.com/escape). The ROM image for Escape
From Supercade! will later be made available online for free digital
download so that videogame fans can play the game via emulator on their
computers.

The new game was developed by Eric Bacher and Igor Barzilai of ebivision
(www.ebivision.com), creators of Pesco and Merlin's Walls as well as a
number of other remarkable new games for vintage video game systems.

"The games we produce are a labor of love," declares Bacher, co-founder of
ebivision. "We don't just do 'old games for antique systems.' Rather, we
innovate by developing new technologies and creating completely new kinds
of games."

Escape From Supercade! will be released in the Spring of 2001 to promote
the launch of Van Burnham's new book, Supercade: A Visual History of the
Videogame Age 1971-1984 - the first book to illustrate and document the
history, legacy, and visual language of the videogame phenomenon -
published by The MIT Press (www.mitpress.mit.edu). In over 400 lavishly
illustrated pages, the book pays tribute to the technology, the games, and
the visionaries who created one of the most influential eras in computer
science.

"As a collector, I wanted a comprehensive printed resource - a full-color
'coffee table' book - on the history of videogames," says Burnham. "My goal
in creating Supercade was to help preserve the history of the videogame
phenomenon as well as pay tribute to the industry legends who often go
unrecognized in the interactive entertainment industry as it exists
today."

Van Burnham, videogame historian and self-professed videogame junkie, is a
member of the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences and
Videogame Website judge for San Francisco's annual Webby Awards
(www.webbyawards.com), as well as a member of the Video Arcade

Preservation Society.

Contact: Van Burnham, van@supercade.com

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From: Julie Emison <julie@delyon-hunt.com>

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MEDIA ALERT

BAM! KA-POW! BOOM! WHOOSH!

INTELLIVISION CELEBRATES ITS 20TH BIRTHDAY
WITH VIDEO GAME KARAOKE AT THE
2000 CLASSIC GAMING EXPO JULY 29 & 30 IN LAS VEGAS

Cover The Antics Including Video Game Karaoke, Introduction Of
Previously Unreleased Games & Meet The Blue Sky Rangers Of Intellivision
Productions

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INTELLIVISION BIRTHDAY BASH:
 Video Game Karaoke Contest, Sat., July 29 at Noon
 Contestants mimic or recreate the sound effects of a video game and are
 judged by the Blue Sky Rangers to win a variety of prizes.

 Birthday Cake Cutting, Sun., July 30 at 3:00pm
 Prior to ceremony, games, prizes, t-shirt giveaways, and interviews
 with the game programmers who founded Intellivision Productions, the
 Blue Sky Rangers:
 Ranger Keith Robinson & Ranger Stephen Roney.

RETRO VIDEO GAME:
Preview the upcoming IntellivisionRocks! on CD-ROM (sequel to
Intellivision Lives!) and buy the previously unreleased cartridges: Sea
Battle and Swordfight for Atari 2600, and Steamroller for Colecovision

CONTACT: Amelia Slawsby, DeLyon-Hunt & Assoc.
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND, INTELLIVISION ROCKS ON!

Sequel CD-ROM Features More Classic Favorites
and Previously Unreleased Games

Intellivision Productions, Inc., the company that brought Intellivision back to life with the Intellivision Lives! CD-ROM, introduces the next must-have in retro video games. Intellivision Rocks!, the sequel to the popular Intellivision Lives! CD-ROM, will be previewed at the 2000 Classic Gaming Expo and will become available on the company's web site on Oct. 31. The introduction of Intellivision Rocks! also coincides with the 20th anniversary of Intellivision, which the company will celebrate in its booth at the Expo.

Intellivision Rocks! will contain more of the games Intellivision fans enjoyed playing on their console systems, including those produced by Activision, Imagic and Mattel Electronics. Games on the CD-ROM include: Beamrider, Dreadnaught Factor, Happy Trails, Microsurgeon, Truckin', Dracula, B-17 Bomber and Mind Strike. It will also contain bonus audio tracks of the theme music of classic games, including "Surfing on Thin Ice," which can be downloaded for free on www.MP3.com/Intellivision. The CD-ROM's audio tracks can be played in a regular CD player, allowing users to listen to their favorite theme music at home, in the car, or on the go.

"When we were programming at Mattel, naturally we checked out the Intellivision games that Activision and our other competitors were doing," said Keith Robinson, president, Intellivision Productions, Inc. and an original programmer of Intellivision games and systems. "And here's the secret: We loved a lot of those games and wished we had done them. We're excited that now we'll be able to release these games on Intellivision Rocks!"

In celebration of all retro games, Intellivision Productions has expanded its online store, called Retrotopia, to carry Atari and Colecovision games in addition to Intellivision products.

Intellivision Rocks! will contain:* * Beamrider, Dreadnaught Factor, Happy Trails, Pitfall, River Raid, Stampede, Worm Whomper and Robot Rumble (previously unreleased) by Activision. * Atlantis, Beauty and the Beast, Demon Attack, Dracula, Dragonfire, Fathom, Ice Trek, Microsurgeon, Nova Blast, Safecracker, Swords and Serpents, Tropical Trouble, Truckin' and White Water! by Imagic. * Intellivision Intellivoice Speech Module games: B-17 Bomber and Bomb Squad. * Intellivision Entertainment Computer System games: Mind Strike and World Series Baseball.

After the fall of Mattel Electronics, the maker of Intellivision, the game programmers (coined the Blue Sky Rangers), who were friends as well as coworkers, remained in touch. Annual reunions and newsletters kept the Rangers informed of each other's goings on, but the world heard little of them. The Blue Sky Rangers had a unique story to tell, so in 1995, Ranger Keith Robinson created the Blue Sky Ranger web site to help share their story. Because of the massive traffic and numerous requests for a way to play retro Intellivision games on today's computers, Robinson and fellow Ranger Stephen Roney founded Intellivision Productions, Inc. in 1996. They bought the rights to the Intellivision system and games and made them PC and Macintosh compatible for millions to relive the excitement of Intellivision. Knowing the popularity of retro games, the company has

expanded its newly named Retrotopia sales site to include Atari and
Colecovision games in addition to Intellivision products. For more
information on Intellivision or other retro games and systems, please visit
the company web site at www.intellivisionlives.com.

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                        A-ONE's Headline News
                  The Latest in Computer Technology News
                     Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

                  Thousands Download King's Web Novel

Stephen King's latest online publishing effort got off to a smooth start
Monday as thousands of users downloaded the first installment of ''The
Plant," a new serial novel. Early indications were that most readers were
abiding by the honor system and coughing up the $1 per copy King is asking
for.

King said putting the new novel in the easy-to-use PDF file format helped
avoid the technical glitches that occurred in March when readers got
stymied trying to download his novella ''Riding the Bullet," which came in
an encrypted format.

On the first day of his new publishing experiment, King made the rounds of
the morning talk shows, appearing on the ''Today" show and ''Good Morning
America," where he told host Diane Sawyer he was testing behavior on the
Internet.

''We have a generation of computer jockeys that we've raised on Napster and
MP3 who have gotten the idea, the mistaken idea, that everything in the
store is free," King said. ''And I'd like to see if we can't reeducate
these people to the idea that the fruits of talent cost you money."

King's premise is simple: He's putting up at least the first two
installments of ''The Plant," a previously unpublished serial novel, but
will only continue to post and write new ones if at least three-quarters of
the readers choose to pay for them.

So far, his bet seemed to be paying off. Marsha DeFilippo, an aide who is
working with King on the project, said that as of Monday afternoon there
had been about 34,000 downloads and that about 75 percent of the users were
paying their dollar right away by credit card. Readers also have the option
of mailing payments to a post office box.

King's latest venture has caused a ruckus in the publishing industry, which
is still coming to terms with the implications brought to their business by
the Internet. Simon & Schuster worked with King on ''Riding the Bullet,"
but is being left out of ''The Plant."

Simon & Schuster says it doesn't expect to lose its business with King, and
for his part King says he still loves writing and reading books.
Nonetheless, many publishers are waiting to see if King can successfully

eliminate his publisher as an interface between himself and his readers -
and still make money in the process.

``I think the publishers might heave a sigh of relief if it doesn't work,"
King told Sawyer. ``But I think we've got a chance here to change the way
people think about stories."

On the Net:

http://www.stephenking.com

                    Macromedia Unleashes Flash 5, New Player, More

Flash 5, the latest version of the product for producing high-impact Web
experiences, will be available in two months from Macromedia.

Rob Burgess, chairman and CEO of Macromedia, says designers will
immediately be comfortable working in Flash 5 because of its familiar
industry standard user interface (which is being implemented across the
company product line), new creative tools, and "seamless integration" with
Macromedia FreeHand and Fireworks. Flash 5 sports ActionScript, a
JavaScript-like language for creating interactivity, and support for XML
data interchange.

The new user interface simplifies the process of inspecting and editing
Macromedia Flash content, says Burgess. A new Bezier pen tool in Macromedia
Flash 5 complements the product's natural drawing tools and enables
traditional illustrators accustomed to technical drawing tools to easily
work within the authoring environment, he adds.

FreeHand users will benefit from the ability to import native FreeHand
files directly into Flash while maintaining the design integrity of the
file. Another new addition to the authoring environment is "Smart Clips,"
components of complex interactivity such as user interface widgets or
multiple choice forms that can be shared, reused, and customized for any
Flash development need. Publishing features in Flash 5 ensure that authors
can easily deploy content for the huge installed base of Macromedia Flash
Players and also add new functionality for exporting content for
synchronized playback in RealPlayer, says Burgess.

For developers, Macromedia Flash 5 significantly extends the capabilities
for creating ActionScripts that build sophisticated interactivity into
Macromedia Flash content. The syntax and structure for writing ActionScript
is now the same as JavaScript, which is familiar to the majority of Web
developers. A new ActionScript editing environment "dramatically" reduces
development time, according to Macromedia.

Shared Symbol Libraries let teams of users on a project organize and reuse
shared media assets across a project. The Movie Explorer lets users see all
the components in a project and their relationships, in a hierarchical
structure.

Flash 5 is also tightly integrated with Macromedia Generator, the solution
for delivering dynamic visual content. Generator 2 Developer Edition, which
is available bundled with the Flash 5 upgrade at a special price, is a
data-driven solution for automating the production of Macromedia Flash Web
sites by separating design from content.

To support the developer community, Flash 5 introduces the Macromedia Dashboard, a central interface built into the authoring environment to provide direct access to the vast amount of online resources relating to authoring with Flash.

Macromedia Flash 5 is expected to ship in September. The product is available in a standalone version for US $399, or as part of the Macromedia Flash 5 FreeHand 9 Studio for $599. Registered users of Macromedia Flash can upgrade to Macromedia Flash 5 for $149 or the Macromedia Flash 5 FreeHand 9 Studio for $249. Professional developers who are registered users of Macromedia Flash may purchase the Flash 5 Generator 2 Pro Developer Upgrade for $648. This offering includes Macromedia Generator 2 Developer Edition at half of its $999 price until December 29.

Along with the new version of Flash itself, Macromedia has announced new features in the Macromedia Flash 5 Player that will purportedly enable developers to engage site visitors with innovative next-generation Web applications. The free Macromedia Flash 5 Player is currently in public beta, and is expected to be available late next month.

Peter Goldie, vice president of product management at Macromedia, says the Macromedia Flash 5 Player is tightly integrated with leading server technologies such as Extensible Markup Language (XML), for structured data transfer, and Macromedia Generator, for delivering server-created, real-time visual content to data-intensive, content-rich, highly-trafficked sites.

For example, an e-commerce site can use Macromedia Generator to process complex catalog information based on user input, keeping the Macromedia Flash content compact by moving all the data-intensive graphics processing to Generator's scalable server infrastructure, he says. The Macromedia Flash 5 Player also has support for HTML formatted text within Macromedia Flash content, as well as the ability to maintain a persistent connection between the lightweight client and server to share real-time XML information for mission-critical business applications.

The player also uses the new ActionScript language that can be authored in Macromedia Flash 5. And it's fully backward compatible so Internet users to continue experiencing Macromedia Flash content authored with earlier versions of Flash. Developers can create new content in Macromedia Flash 5 that will play back on older versions of the player, as the new player gains acceptance online. For more information on Macromedia Flash 5 Player, visit its Web site.

Speaking of that common interface experience, starting with Flash 5, future versions of Macromedia products will include common interface elements and a consistent look and feel. This interface was driven by customer feedback and evolves from the existing cross-product integration and interface strengths of the Macromedia Web authoring product line, says Kevin Lynch, president of products at Macromedia.

Common user interface elements will make the applications more approachable while retaining a high degree of familiarity and flexibility, he adds. Customizable keyboard shortcuts will enable designers to configure the product to fit into their personal design workflow. Common application features will be quickly accessed from the launcher bar. Menu structures, color selection, tool layouts and groupings will be consistent across all products. Tools such as the Bezier pen tool will feel and behave identically across products.

"The Macromedia User Interface brings an immediate accessibility to our products, making the authoring process more intuitive to existing users and more approachable to new users," Lynch says. "Our products have always been integrated to streamline the authoring workflow, and the new interface will make that process more consistent and visually seamless."

In other, less compelling (for Mac users) news, Macromedia and Intel have announced joint development efforts to bring Intel's Internet 3D Graphics software technology to the Macromedia Shockwave Player. The two companies say that such 3D software developers Alias|Wavefront, Discreet Logic, NxView Technologies and Softimage have all pledged their support for the 3D technology Intel and Macromedia are developing for the Internet. No word yet on what this portends for the Mac platform.

Intel To Bring SDRAM To Pentium 4

Chip giant set to make public plans to support synchronous dynamic RAM for Pentium 4's, with the chip set shipping next year.

Intel Corp. Tuesday will make public plans to support synchronous dynamic RAM (SDRAM) for its forthcoming Pentium 4 chip.

The news is important, because it will help PC makers bring the cost of Pentium 4 systems down.

The chip maker has added to its roadmap a new chip set that will support 133MHz SDRAM, known as PC133, for the Pentium 4.

The chip set will be available next year, Intel officials said. Sources expect that it will ship in the second half of the year.

Intel officials feel that Rambus direct RAM (RDRAM) will continue to be the memory of choice for the performance desktop.

However, they acknowledge a need for a memory technology that will allow PC makers to deliver Pentium 4 systems at lower, "mainstream" prices. RDRAM continues to command a hefty premium over SDRAM.

News of the new chip set may seem like a change of direction for Intel, which had previously only publicly stated support for RDRAM on the Pentium 4.

However, the company maintains that it always considers supporting multiple memory technologies for its chip sets.

So was Intel looking at supporting SDRAM or even double data rate DRAM (DDR DRAM) for Pentium 4?

"We continuously assesses new technologies for our chip sets and processors," said Intel spokesman George Alfs. "We have decided that this is the right time to discuss this with our customers."

Alfs said that in fact, "we are investigating a DDR option for this chip set." However, there are no other details on whether or not the company will make such an option available.

Intel will offer SDRAM support, and is evaluating DDR, because "We want to make sure that Pentium 4 ... is accessible to everyone with a variety of chip sets and memory types," Alfs said.

As has been previously discussed, the Pentium 4 will enter the market at the high end. The first chip set available for it will be Intel's 850, which will support dual channel RDRAM.

Intel's PC133 chip set for Pentium 4 could be around for some time.

Intel officials predict SDRAM will be available at least through the end of 2001.

Symantec Invests $18 Million In Spam Filtering Start-up

Antivirus software maker Symantec today announced its $18 million investment in Brightmail, a start-up that creates filters for junk email.

The funding, which will give Cupertino, Calif.-based Symantec an 11 percent stake in Brightmail, marks the first time the company has made a strategic investment in a pre-IPO company. In addition, Symantec executive vice president Dana Siebert will join the board of directors of San Francisco-based Brightmail.

Earlier this year, the two companies created a joint antivirus and antispam product. Symantec spokeswoman Genevieve Haldeman said the company will benefit from the new relationship by capitalizing on Brightmail's Internet service provider and application service provider customer base.

"Brightmail is very much focused on the entire service provider space," Haldeman said. "We are traditionally focused on the enterprise market, corporate customers."

Symantec's investment represents about half of the $35 million that Brightmail raised in a third round of venture financing. Critical Path, which makes email systems for corporations, was another key investor.

"The fact that the leaders in the security and message management sectors--along with several top-tier VCs--are investing in Brightmail is sure validation that we are on the right track with our solutions and market potential," Brightmail CEO Gary Hermansen said in a statement.

Microsoft to Release New Windows Test Version

Microsoft said on Thursday it would soon release the first test version of new Windows software that will finally unify two flavors of its computer operating system and save the software giant time and money.

The new software, code-named Whistler, will be available in beta, or test, form this October, just a month after the release of Windows Millennium, an update to the Windows 98 product aimed at average consumers.

Whistler, which will also target home users, is based on NT, the same programming technology that powers Windows 2000, Microsoft's industrial

strength operating system for heavy duty computers used in corporate networks.

Windows is split into two families: one meant for consumers and home users that is based on aging DOS programming technology, and one for business clients based on the more stable and secure NT technology.

Whistler marks the biggest step toward ditching the old DOS code and moving all of Microsoft's products and development efforts to NT-based projects.

''We are really now driving to a single code base across our entire Windows product line," Brian Valentine, senior vice president for the Windows division, told a meeting of financial analysts.

Because Microsoft maintains separate teams for the two kinds of Windows, unifying them will help it cut development costs and bring its engineers under a single umbrella, Valentine said.

''It costs us a lot to have those two code bases in the company. By driving to a single core technology ... it just makes the whole industry more efficient," Valentine said.

Whistler would likely be released to manufacturers in the second half of next year, with the final version going on sale in time to tap the back-to-school and holiday computer buying rush, Valentine said.

But analysts, whose comments on the sidelines of the meeting Microsoft required be kept off the record, warned that putting Whistler on sale so soon after the release of Millennium could stifle sales of Millennium by making more people wait until Whistler, which promises bigger performance gains.

''They stand the risk of confusing the (sales) channel and customers," one analyst said.

The software will also be tied in with Microsoft's new .NET concept that aims to integrate different software, devices and Internet services, Valentine said.

Other Whistler features will include better security so, for example, a parent could prevent a child from accessing financial data, and a quicker restart time that could be narrowed to as short as 10 seconds, compared to the several minutes that operation now takes.

Microsoft also said it was on track to issue the first package of bug fixes and updates to Windows 2000 on August 1. That service pack is expected to help fuel demand among potential customers who balked at buying Windows 2000 when it was launched in February until initial problems were fixed.

The most powerful and expensive version of Windows 2000, the Data Center product that will target only the most demanding networks such as in financial institutions or research facilities, is scheduled for release on August 11, Microsoft said.

Free Web Access Leader Is Revamping

Offering free Internet access to anyone willing to surrender personal

information and submit to a constant barrage of on-screen ads, NetZero Inc. has in less than two years attracted more than 4 million registered users.

By that yardstick, the company follows only America Online's 23 million in sheer user numbers.

But NetZero is under attack by scores of imitators, and investor skepticism has pushed down its share price more than 80 percent. Serious questions are being raised about businesses predicated on giving away Internet access alone.

So what is NetZero doing? It's morphing.

In all, more than 100 free Internet service providers are in business, most backed by well-known companies that want to lure customers to Web sites or build brand loyalty.

Kmart, for example, has BlueLight.com, created in a partnership with Yahoo! Others include the Web portals Lycos and AltaVista, the online trading company Ameritrade, Seventeen magazine and Ace Hardware.

At the same time, a shakeout has begun among independent free-access providers.

Worldspy.com and Freewwweb LLC shut down this month after running out of money. Both referred users - several hundred thousand at least - to Juno Online Services, an ISP hybrid that offers both free and paid Internet access.

''The free ISPs that rely solely on advertising are not going to survive," said Steven Harris, an analyst with International Data Corp. ''I think some of them are definitely heading toward oblivion, and some of them are going to evolve into a new system."

The first free ISPs appeared in 1996, born on the theory that the Internet could operate much like commercial television, with ad sales generating enough revenue to cover costs and turn a profit.

But high telecommunications costs and weak ad sales forced pioneers such as Hypernet and Freeride out of business. NetZero was founded in 1998, after telecom costs began to drop and advertisers began warming to the World Wide Web.

Since going public last year, NetZero has lost $49.3 million on revenues of $29.1 million. From a high of $40 in December, its stock closed at $5.688 Monday on the Nasdaq Stock Market.

So it's shifting gears, launching new ventures to supplement ad revenue.

A marketing research division sells general, anonymous data about user browsing habits to advertisers. In April, cellular technology developer Qualcomm Inc. paid $144 million for a 10 percent stake in NetZero, giving the company more than $200 million in cash.

For the longer term, NetZero and Qualcomm are developing a fee-based wireless service aimed at laptops and handheld devices.

As well, NetZero has counterattacked against newcomers such as Kmart, partnering with companies that want to create their own free ISP.

The biggest customer so far is General Motors, which signed a four-year, $100 million deal for the ISP and an e-commerce link on NetZero's ad bar.

With the new ventures, NetZero remains committed to its free dial-up service, said Mark Goldston, NetZero's chairman and chief executive.

''We're seeing more and more mass market, powerhouse audiences come to NetZero," Goldston, a former chief marketing officer at Reebok, said in an interview. ''Our revenues are up, our targeted advertising in working and our telecommunications costs are going down."

A big obstacle, though, is how many registered users regularly log on.

Although No. 2 in terms of registered users, NetZero ranked 14th, with 1.8 million unique users - individual users who logged on at least once per month - in ratings by PC Data.

Goldston claims he's not disturbed by the perception that NetZero users are low-budget consumers less likely to respond to online advertising.

Those same bargain-hunting consumers will bring mass market advertisers to the Internet the way they brought them to television, he argues.

Goldston is making his case through aggressive marketing, including a three-year deal to sponsor the halftime show of televised National Basketball Association games.

Currently, fewer than 10 percent of U.S. Internet users log on through a cost-free access subscriber. Over the next three years the market will grow to 15 percent to 20 percent, forecasts Youssef Squali, an analyst with ING Barings in New York.

NetZero, he believes, will be among of two or three major players to dominate the space. Juno, which like NetZero has strong brand recognition, is another likely candidate, he said.

''Consolidation is where the business is going. Two years out while you may still have smaller mom and pop shops with a few hundred thousand customers, they will basically be stuck in the middle," Squali predicted.

Meanwhile, the so-called retail-sponsored private labels - like General Motors - should comprise about 70 percent of the free ISP market by 2003, compared to 30 percent at present, said Dylan Brooks, an analyst with Jupiter Communications.

Court Showdown Looms for Napster

Napster Inc., the small company that has used the Internet and digital technology to revolutionize music distribution, could see its death warrant signed by a federal judge.

The Recording Industry Association of America is seeking a temporary injunction that would all but put Napster out of business pending a trial over whether the San Mateo-based company is violating copyright law.

The hearing was scheduled to begin Wednesday.

Napster works as a clearinghouse - pointing users to computers where songs in the popular MP3 format can be downloaded. The industry considers itself in a life-or-death struggle with a software startup that has made music piracy simple.

The dispute is being closely watched. Heavy metal band Metallica has been particularly outspoken against Napster. Other artists are also anti-Napster, but many are ambivalent.

The company is daily conversation grist among young people who use it with a vengeance, but it has also prompted congressional hearings and caused considerable angst in corporate boardrooms.

It is unclear whether Internet music file-swapping is so bad for the music industry after all.

A recent study of more than 2,200 online music fans by Jupiter Communications suggests that users of Napster and other music-sharing programs are 45 percent more likely to increase their music purchasing than fans who aren't trading digital bootlegs online.

The recording industry says the Napster case isn't about alienating music lovers, but rather about protecting artists.

''Clearly, people who are using Napster love music. They're probably our best customers," said Hilary Rosen, president of the RIAA.

On May 9, Chief U.S. District Judge Marilyn Hall Patel rejected Napster's claim that the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998 protected it from the illegal actions of its users. Napster promptly adjusted its defense strategy, arguing that personal copying of music is protected by federal law.

The RIAA estimates that song-swapping via Napster by an estimated 20 million people worldwide has cost the music industry more than $300 million in lost sales.

Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich told a Senate committee earlier this month that Napster users are basically stealing.

That attitude has angered many fans.

''I think they should just shut up," James Cavanaugh, 25, said of Metallica. ''They don't have to worry about getting fans. It's really about control."

''Napster and the Internet shouldn't hurt record sales," said Stephen Flinn, 40, a jazz percussionist attending an Internet music convention in New York on Tuesday. ''Music is the healing force of the universe. A true artist is going to want his music to be heard through whatever medium."

Among the Net-savvy, it's pretty much agreed that online music swapping is here to stay whatever happens to Napster.

''All of this litigation is really setting the groundwork for what is going to the future of the Internet," said Larry Iser, an intellectual property attorney.

Iser, who has worked with the Beatles and Michael Jackson to protect their copyrights, says Internet companies must develop ''protected,

royalty-generating" downloading systems.

Several companies have developed such systems, but most users resist paying for something they can get free from Napster, and some of the systems have been invaded by hackers.

Judge Orders Injunction Vs. Napster

It didn't take long for the first howls of dissent to be heard over a federal court order that will likely shut down Napster Inc.'s wildly popular online song-sharing service at midnight Friday.

''What's next ... shut down the free Internet?" one music fan wrote in a Napster chat room. Another, with the user name UnrEvil, criticized the heavy metal band Metallica, which sued to stop fans from trading their music on Napster. ''I'm never going to buy or listen to their music," the fan said.

Chief U.S. District Judge Marilyn Hall Patel granted the preliminary injunction Wednesday at the request of the Recording Industry Association of America, which sued Napster in December for copyright infringement.

The judge said Napster had the capability to police the unauthorized trade of copyrighted music through its system, but failed to do so.

''They've created a monster, for lack of a better term, and that's the consequence they face," she said. ''I can't just let it go on."

Napster CEO Hank Barry said the company plans to appeal: ''We intend to see this through in every venue, in every court."

An estimated 20 million Napster users worldwide will be affected by the court order in the landmark battle over Internet technology and intellectual property rights. The order applies only to copyrighted music, but Napster attorneys said it would cripple or shut down the swapping service.

The injunction will go into effect after the nation's largest record producers post a $5 million bond against any financial losses Napster suffers from being shut down pending trial.

''I'm disappointed, but I think that there will soon be another way to download free music on the Internet," said Elisabeth Prot, a music fan in San Francisco. ''The recording industry promotes one single off of one CD. You don't really get to hear the rest of the tracks ... They can be either good or horrible."

Napster, the dorm-room project of Shawn Fanning, has grown into a phenomenon, with a million new users each month using it to download free software that allows the exchange of music stored on personal computers.

Investors have poured in millions of dollars and installed seasoned music industry executives at the San Mateo, Calif., company that became an industry target because song file directories are generated via the company's computer servers.

The recording industry accused Napster of encouraging an unrestrained and

illegal online bazaar. Metallica also sued, saying more than 300,000 Napster users had traded its songs online. Napster responded by blocking access for more than 30,000 people, but new users continued trading the band's music.

''We're elated," Metallica drummer Lars Ulrich told The Associated Press. ''Sharing is such a warm, cuddly, friendly word ... this is not sharing, it's duplicating."

RIAA attorney Russell Frackman told the court that as the hearing was going on 1,400 songs were being downloaded each minute via Napster's software. As the hearing ended Wednesday, 757,000 files were being traded in 6,857 libraries - and that was on only one of Napster's more than 100 computer servers.

The RIAA estimates that song-swapping via Napster by people worldwide has cost the music industry more than $300 million in lost sales.

Napster argued that personal copying of music is protected by federal law, and that it encouraged the sampling of new music and new artists.

Napster's attorney, David Boies, also said the company would end up removing legally traded songs if ordered to eliminate copyrighted music traded through its service.

The judge downplayed such hardships and told Boies that the same ''bright minds" that created Napster's technology would need to devise a solution to comply with copyright law.

The injunction will likely have no effect on Gnutella and other decentralized technologies spawned by Napster. With Gnutella, there is no center; song files are traded directly between a constantly changing collection of computer users.

For now, Napster remains the focus of a long-running dispute between copyright owners and Internet enthusiasts who believe information of all sorts should be traded freely.

''All of this litigation is really setting the groundwork for what is going to the future of the Internet," said Larry Iser, an intellectual property attorney.

Senator McCain Introduces Internet Privacy Bill

A key senator introduced legislation on Wednesday that would require Web sites to disclose what they do with personal data collected from visitors, a sign of Congress's growing interest in establishing new consumer protections for the digital era.

The bill, introduced by Commerce Committee Chairman John McCain, would not prohibit Web sites from using visitors' personal data for marketing purposes, but it would require them to tell Web surfers what steps they may take to limit that use.

''Clearly, business should inform consumers in a forthcoming manner how they treat personal information and give consumers meaningful choices as to how that information is used," the Arizona Republican said.

Joining McCain in sponsoring the bill were Senators Spencer Abraham, a Michigan Republican, and Democrats John Kerry of Massachusetts and Barbara Boxer of California.

Many Web sites require visitors to submit information such as name, age and zip code in order to use their sites; others track visitors' actions using a technology called ''cookies."

The Federal Trade Commission issued a report in May concluding legislation was needed to bolster privacy protections although Congress and the White House at the time said they preferred to give voluntary industry efforts more time.

But the lack of an enforceable industry standard, highlighted by the recent attempt of bankrupt retailer Toysmart.com Inc. to sell a consumer database, has renewed interest in federal oversight.

Lawmakers in both chambers of Congress have introduced legislation to prevent other companies from emulating Toysmart.

Kerry said industry attempts at self-regulation have not proven sufficient, and government legislation is necessary to ensure continued growth of the Internet.

''Self-regulation will have a continued role to play, but it has not been enough," he said.

The bill would enable consumers to sue Web sites who violate the bill's agreements to sue for up to $22,000. It also would call on the National Academy of Sciences to conduct an 18-month study to determine if similar protections are needed for customers of offline, ''bricks and mortar" businesses.

McCain said that the Commerce Committee, which he chairs, will hold hearings on the issue and pass the bill on to the Senate for a full vote in September.

Last Friday, the Federal Trade Commission reached an agreement with Toysmart that would allow the failed dot-com to sell its customer list to a similar company that was prepared to honor its earlier privacy commitment.

Bill Addresses E-mail Surveillance

Attorney General Janet Reno said Thursday she will not suspend the FBI's court-approved monitoring of some people's e-mail messages while the law enforcement program is under review at the Justice Department.

''I think that" FBI ''agents can still use it" during the review of the FBI's new ''Carnivore" surveillance system, Reno said at her weekly news briefing.

Reno said it is important ''that we be able to explain the process and address the issues raised by the industry, privacy experts and others." She said her hope is that ''we will be able to address these issues in a thoughtful way and resolve them."

Reno's comments came amid a move in Congress to increase the burden on federal law enforcement agencies to justify monitoring people's e-mail messages and other communications.

Rep. Bob Barr confirmed that he and his staff are at work on a bill that would rein in ''Carnivore" and place additional restrictions on telephone wiretaps as well.

Barr, R-Ga., said he was concerned about computer eavesdropping capability before attending a hearing on Capitol Hill earlier this week, and he said he ''came out of it scared."

Privacy advocates and computer experts called Carnivore a ''black box" in testimony Monday, and said only the FBI knows what it truly does. They also contended that information the FBI gets from the device, installed at a suspect's Internet service provider, is far more than what could be gleaned from a telephone wiretap and statutes governing telephone surveillance are being misused.

In a telephone ''trap-and-trace" or ''pen register" wiretap, authorities can get a list of phone calls made to and from a certain telephone number. The usable information is limited to the 10-digit telephone numbers and the time of calls; the phone company, when given a court order, provides the information.

Current laws and judicial precedent say that the numbers a person dials are not private communications, and therefore authorities do not need to show that a crime has been committed.

With Carnivore, that statute is being extended to the Internet world.

The details of Barr's bill aren't clear yet, but he said it would address the issue of translating telephone wiretap law to the Internet by designing strict constraints for monitoring the medium. It would also make sure that evidence gained from an e-mail tap would not yield more information than a similar court order for a telephone tap.

The FBI's new surveillance mechanism sits at the subject's ISP and scans the addressing information coming from or going to the suspect's computer. This can reveal far more information than a simple e-mail address, such as a subject line describing the contents of the message.

''Capturing Internet origin and destination address instead of 'numbers dialed' could create a much more intrusive form of surveillance that is not clearly supported by law," said Alan B. Davidson, staff counsel at the Center for Democracy and Technology.

For authorities to be able to request e-mail contents they must show probable cause and obtain a search warrant. The same is true for listening in on a telephone call.

Regarding the inner workings of Carnivore, the FBI is resisting a Freedom of Information Act request by the American Civil Liberties Union for Carnivore's computer code, but said it will submit to an external review.

Since the Carnivore computer, devoid of keyboard and mouse, sits at the suspect's ISP and is locked down from any manipulation from non-FBI personnel, Internet providers have bristled at the idea of letting it sit on their networks.

Donald M. Kerr, assistant director of the bureau's laboratory division, said in an interview that the FBI would love to have the ISP provide the information authorities need, but the cost and technical knowledge can be prohibitive for small Internet companies.

Peter William Sachs, a lawyer and president of ICONN, a small Internet provider in Connecticut, said the job could be done with two lines of computer code, and called it a ''trivial" task.

British Cyber-Snooping Bill Made a Law

Legislation allowing the British government to track e-mails and seize encrypted Internet communications has passed its final hurdle in Parliament.

The law, hailed by the government as a bulwark against organized crime but condemned by civil libertarians as the harbinger of an Orwellian state, was approved by the House of Commons on Wednesday evening. After the formality of a royal signature, it will become law on Friday.

The measure enables law-enforcement authorities to demand records of Internet traffic and view the content of encrypted messages. Once the law takes effect in October, the snooping will be overseen from a multimillion-dollar spy center reported to be located within the headquarters of MI5, Britain's domestic espionage agency.

Internet service providers will be required to set up secure channels to the center - innocuously named the Government Technical Assistance Center - so they can transmit information about Internet traffic.

The government says the law is needed to fight technology-savvy criminals and crack down on cybercrime.

Lawmakers in the House of Commons agreed without a vote to adopt amendments to the bill proposed by the House of Lords, the upper chamber of Parliament.

The amendments sought to allay the fears of Internet service providers about the cost of complying with the new rules, and calm businesses and financial institutions who worried that being forced to hand over the keys to encrypted material could compromise Internet security.

Encryption is commonly used by business and in e-commerce transactions to protect credit card numbers and other sensitive information.

Under the amendments, individuals will not be required to prove they do not hold the keys to encrypted material - a provision that was criticized by rights groups as a reversal of the burden of proof.

And Home Office Minister of State Charles Clarke, the government official in charge of the bill, said law enforcers who ask to see records of Internet traffic will not be able to read the content of the messages.

Web page logs - lists of Internet sites browsed - also may not be obtained without a warrant.

Clarke said the government would contribute $30 million to service providers to cover the cost of installing the ''black box" links to the

spy center.

''We believe that the worry that the bill will cause financial crises for particular companies is unfounded," he said.

The fears of civil libertarians may prove harder to calm.

Labor Party lawmaker Harry Cohen worried that information obtained by one agency could be passed on to others, and said the system - overseen by a single interception commissioner - was open to abuse.

''I think that the provisions dealing with communications data are born of complacency, are unsatisfactory, and have little regard for the protection of privacy and commercial confidences," he said.

FTC Fines E-tailers $1.5 Million

Seven Internet retailers today agreed to pay a total of $1.5 million in fines stemming from Federal Trade Commission charges over shipping delays last holiday season.

The online stores, which include major retailers Toysrus.com, Macys.com, CDNow and KBKids.com, were charged with violating the FTC's rules for mail and telephone orders.

As part of an investigation dubbed Project TooLate.com, the FTC alleges that the online stores did not give shoppers enough notice of impending shipping delays or that they continued to promise deliveries they could not make during the holiday season.

As part of the settlement, the retailers have agreed to change their procedures.

"Although there are still 151 shopping days until Christmas, today's announcement is an early gift for Internet shoppers," Jodie Bernstein, director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection, said in a statement.

"Last December, a large number of e-commerce buyers didn't get the type of notice of late shipment the law requires and were misled about delivery dates. Many retailers ended up looking more like Scrooge than Santa."

Bernstein also said the action shows the FTC is equally serious about enforcing the rules for online and offline retailers.

As part of the settlements, Macys.com must pay $350,000 in fines and fund a consumer education campaign online about the mail order rule. KBkids.com and Toysrus.com were also fined $350,000 each and CDNow must pay $300,000.

CDNow's penalty amount will be waived except for $100,000 because of its poor financial condition.

Other retailers involved included Patriot Computers, which was fined $200,000, and the Original Honey Baked Ham Company of Georgia, which must pay $45,000.

In addition, Minidiscnow.com, which is no longer in operation, must fully reimburse each consumer who ordered but did not receive the company's

products.

The investigation was prompted by consumer complaints last Christmas that online stores were not meeting express delivery deadlines. The FTC's rule requires that if retailers cannot meet stated deadlines, they must issue a notice to consumers so that they can decide whether they want to cancel the order.

Microsoft Asks for Lower-Court Review of Appeal

Microsoft Wednesday asked the Supreme Court to send its appeal of antitrust violations back to a lower appellate court, arguing the high court should avoid a ``morass" of issues in the case.

Microsoft, which was ordered split in two by a district judge, said its appeal raises many factual and legal issues that are best left to the U.S. Court of Appeals.

Microsoft may be hoping for an advantage as that court ruled for the company in a related 1998 government-initiated antitrust case.

District Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson ruled in June that Microsoft had used its monopoly power to compete illegally and unfairly, a decision Microsoft appealed. At the request of Solicitor General Seth Waxman, the government's chief advocate before the Supreme Court, Jackson sent the appeal directly to the high court under a special law.

In asking that a lower court first review the case, Microsoft argued the appeal will entail ``a morass of procedural and substantive issues that can be resolved only through a painstaking review of a lengthy and technologically complex trial record."

Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal, whose state is a partner with the Justice Department in the case, said the high court need consider only a few issues.

``The fact is that Judge Jackson's finding and conclusions have crystallized the issues into a very small, manageable number that are of exactly the national importance and urgency that dictate Supreme Court review," he said.

In a statement, the Justice Department declined comment on Microsoft's views: ``The appeal is pending before the Supreme Court and the department will respond in its filings."

Justice files Aug. 15, Microsoft may respond on Aug. 22 and the high court would decide later whether to keep the case.

Microsoft harshly criticized Judge Jackson for giving press interviews, which it said raise a ``serious question" about the judge's impartiality.

In fact, Microsoft said one of the questions it wants to raise with an appeals court is whether another judge should be assigned to the case if it goes back to a trial court.

Jackson's press interviews were only one of at least 19 issues Microsoft said would require the attention of an appeals court.

''The sheer number of issues raised by Microsoft's appeals makes these cases unsuitable for direct appeal" under a 1974 law, the company said.

The law says government-initiated antitrust cases of "general public importance" in ''the administration of justice" should get direct consideration by the Supreme Court.

Said Connecticut's Blumenthal: ''If ever an antitrust case merited direct review by the Supreme Court because of its critical impact on our economy and justice system, this one is it."

Microsoft argued that the ''severity of the remedy and the significance of these cases make it more important -- not less -- that these appeals proceed through intermediate appellate review in the normal course."

Before 1974, all antitrust cases brought by the federal government were appealed directly to the Supreme Court, numbering anywhere from two to four a year.

Congress passed the law to give some relief to the high court but made it clear government-initiated antitrust cases were special and could not be treated the same way as ordinary appeals to the high court, supporters of the government say.

A House Judiciary Committee report on Oct. 11, 1974, said the measure it was writing did ''not mean that the Supreme Court is intended to have a free and absolute discretion to hear or not hear a case on direct review," as it would with ordinary cases.

In the 26 years since the law took effect, only two other cases have been considered on direct appeal.

Microsoft said that Jackson and the government were trying to use the law ''to evade the authority of the Court of Appeals."

The firm said the Supreme Court ''should not countenance the district's court's attempt, abetted by (the government) to circumvent appellate review by the Court of Appeals."

It noted the Court of Appeals has already decided to have its entire court hear the case, instead of a three-judge panel, which will help speed up the process.

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